



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

NEW BOOKS REVIEWED

THE NAVY AS A FIGHTING MACHINE. By REAR ADMIRAL BRADLEY A. FISKE, U. S. N. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916.

The value of most books—always excepting dictionaries, cyclopaedias, and social surveys—lies not in their comprehensiveness, but in the fact that they hit the point. Admiral Fiske's book is not a book of wide generalities about war or about the nation's manifest destinies, nor yet a book of exclusively technical information. It admirably occupies a middle ground, and it effectively hits the points at which most readers in their thought about the navy are aiming. The purpose of the book is, in short, to answer the questions: "What is the navy for? Of what parts should it be composed? What principles should be followed in designing, preparing, and operating it in order to get the maximum return for the money expended?"

With a self-restraint and a common sense that are unusual in the discussion of the now controversial war-and-peace question, Admiral Fiske shows by a deliberate and clear-cut analysis that neither civilization, commerce, nor Christianity—the forces chiefly relied upon—have seemed capable of preventing war, or even of restraining it. The thing that has held back the logical outcome of the causes that make for war, that has averted an absolute Armageddon in which two enormous empires, dividing the world between them, should contend for mastery, has been very largely just the national decadence that follows upon success. But under modern conditions it seems entirely possible that "some monster of efficiency will have time to acquire world mastery before her period of decadence sets in."

Thus the more debatable and, in this particular year, the more often debated side of the preparedness question is dealt with somewhat summarily, but in a manner really elucidating. The view expressed is that of an earnest, practical, clear-sighted thinker, and it is impressive. What the public knows less about and is more immediately concerned with is the *use* of the navy. In regard to this important matter there are certain solid and pragmatically true principles which most persons imperfectly understand.

When the average person thinks of "naval defense" he commonly thinks only of defense against invasion, and he assumes that

to provide only for such defense has been the conscious and consistent military policy of this country. In regard to the latter point, it gives rather a shock to settled conviction to read the relevant passage in the Constitution: "The Congress shall have power to levy and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, *to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.* . . ." As Admiral Fiske points out, "the juxtaposition of the words 'common defense' and 'general welfare' could hardly have been accidental, or have been due to any other cause than the juxtaposition of those ideas in the minds of the Constitution's framers."

But apart from Constitutional questions it is a matter of practical fact that naval defense consists of three parts: first, defense of the coast against bombardment and invasion, second, defense of trade routes traversed by ships carrying the exports and imports of a country, and third, defense of the national policy, including defense of the nation's reputation, honor, and prestige.

In regard to all of these, misapprehensions are common. As to the first, it is commonly supposed that all that is needed is adequate fortifications and that it makes comparatively little difference whether the big guns and defensive armor be on land or on water. It is not perceived that a naval defense must be offensive; that it is the business of a navy to go and meet the enemy navy and destroy it. But still more radical is the misapprehension about the function of the navy as a defender of trade routes. Is this really necessary, queries the man in the street, even in the unlikely event of war? If a nation can be made self-supporting, it will not starve, even if blockaded—such is the hopeful theory. But "starvation has absolutely nothing to do with the case. If some discovery were made by which Great Britain could grow enough to support all her people, she would still keep her great navy—simply because she has found it a good investment." The fact may be unideal, but it is a fact, and it is based upon the constitution and nature of commerce. It is difficult to realize what would happen as the result of the sudden stoppage of the trade of the United States with countries over the sea. Even though the country would not starve, the sudden stopping or deranging of the whole huge mechanism of business would be disastrous. A sudden change of this sort would be a catastrophe comparable to the wrecking of a railroad train. These are points that the author explains and enforces with adequate and memorable illustrations.

The statement of these general principles, however, will not perhaps strike the reader so forcibly as the simple remark that "the United States has not yet made a correct estimate of the naval situation; she has not reached the point that Great Britain reached ten years ago."

This phrase "estimate of the situation" is significant. In a

general way this phrase expresses exactly what has been lacking in most of the debates and the discussions about preparedness that we have heard or read during the past year or two. In its strict sense the phrase denotes a logical, thoroughly-tried-out method of determining just what a military force has to do, what means are at its command, and what difficulties it has to overcome. It may be stretched to include in a general sense all that Admiral Fiske treats of in the second half of his book.

Practically the heart of the treatise is comprised in the author's chapters upon "Designing the Machine," "Preparing the Active Fleet," and "Operating the Machine." It is not upon the qualities of armorplate or the penetrating power of projectiles or the advantages of certain types of ships that the author enlarges, but upon the navy as a complex organism—as an instrument composed partly of flesh and blood and brains and partly of steel. Just why is it so extremely important that the number of "personal parts" in the machine should be exactly right? The question admits of something like a mathematical answer. "An insufficient number of men in the ratio of 9 to 8, may mean a falling off in the output of the machine much greater than in the ratio of 9 to 8." Why is a general staff so important a part of naval organization? "In order to direct the drills of a fleet toward some worthy end, that end itself must be clearly seen; and in order that it may be clearly seen, it first must be discovered. The end does not exist as a bright mark in the sky, but as the answer to a difficult problem." This, with the insight that the author gives us into the problems of strategy and into the actual methods of their solution, is a more than adequate reply to our query. Just how does skill in operating the naval machine "come in"? The author's explanation of the elementary principles of naval tactics and of the relative power of two fleets in action as the battle progresses, not only answers this question fully but impresses upon one, as nothing else could, the tremendous importance of dependable, correlated, highly developed skill in the navy.

Even if the navy were kept up only as an object lesson in efficiency, one would like to put Admiral Fiske's book into the hands of young men simply as a study of the way in which difficult practical problems containing many variables have to be solved—as a study, too, in the relation between duty and efficiency. But the book has an important practical and present message. It is an authoritative book, a simple book, a book that contains just the facts—technical or otherwise—that are needed for intelligent judgment.

LETTERS OF RICHARD WATSON GILDER. Edited by his daughter, ROSAMOND GILDER. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916.

"Life is a tug." So St. Gaudens once remarked to La Farge, with whom he was collaborating in connection with the Church